

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-1317

April 14, 2016

Acting Regional Administrator Robert Kaplan  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5  
Ralph Metcalfe Federal Building  
77 West Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

Dear Acting Administrator Kaplan,

I am writing today to express my deep concern about the problem of lead contaminated water in the city of Galesburg, Illinois. As I'm sure you are aware, Galesburg has had an ongoing problem with lead content in their water. In the majority of compliance tests performed since 1992, Galesburg's water has exceeded the federal action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb) for lead content. Their most recent test, concluded in December 2015, showed lead levels at 22 ppb. According to the City of Galesburg, there are approximately 4,700 water service lines made out of lead which represents roughly one third of the total service lines in the city.

As a mother and a grandmother, what I find most disturbing is that, according to the Illinois Lead Program's 2014 Annual Surveillance Report, more than 14 percent of the children in Knox County who were given blood tests had lead levels above 5 micrograms per deciliter, the point at which the Center for Disease Control recommends public health actions be initiated.

Lead contamination can have a devastating impact on children and pregnant women including behavioral problems, shorter attention spans, reduced IQ, and impaired learning. At extremely high levels, it can attack the brain and central nervous system to cause coma, convulsions and even death.

Everyone deserves the right to clean drinking water and this crisis demands the full attention and effort of officials at all levels of government.

For all of these reasons, I am requesting that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency take immediate action to fully examine this issue and work with my office, Galesburg city officials and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to develop a long-term solution that will protect the families of Galesburg.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this critically important issue.

Sincerely,



Cheri Bustos  
Member of Congress